

## ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study reports on the observed and reported experiences of 26 heterogeneously grouped eighth grade students in a regular education civics class using role-play, questioning and summarization to foster critical thinking and the possibility of the improvement in standardized test scores with the development of critical thinking skills. The study defines critical thinking and identifies a method of measuring critical thinking growth. The work also reports how dramatic activities, teacher and student generated questions, and reinforcement of summarization skills help students develop critical thinking skills. The study provided evidence that role-play, questioning and summarization improved these students' critical thinking skills. Furthermore, the study presents data from pre and post-study tests suggesting that the strategies used to improve critical thinking also improved student performance on standardized test.